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THE FUTURE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE.

BY- HOUGHTON, HUBERT W.
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THE RESEARCH REVIEWED INDICATES THE NEED FOR A WELL-DEFINED CONCEPTION OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE PROGRAM AS A UNIQUELY FUNCTIONING ENTITY. EMERGING AGREEMENTS WHICH MAY BECOME PART OF THE BASIC THEORY AND FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE INCLUDE (1) MODIFICATION OF PUPIL, TEACHER, AND PARENT BEHAVIOR WITH OBJECTIVES BASED ON THE REGULAR STUDY OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS, (2) SERVICES WHICH ARE AVAILABLE FOR ALL BOYS AND GIRLS, (3) SPECIAL KNOWLEDGES, APPROACHES AND TRAINING DEVELOPED PARTICULARLY FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR, (4) FUTURE ACTION WITH RESPECT TO THEORY, PRACTICES, COUNSELOR ROLE, AND FUNCTION WHICH IS COOPERATIVELY DEVELOPED BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL STAFF AT ALL LEVELS (LOCAL AND STATE) , AND (5) THE NEED FOR MORE PREVENTION-CENTERED AND LESS PROBLEM-CENTERED COUNSELING. DISAGREEMENT IS GENERATED BY THE USE OF A VARIETY OF ALREADY EXISTING APPROACHES IN ELEMENTARY GUIDANCE (SUCH AS THERAPEUTIC COUNSELING, SECONDARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE, CHILD STUDY) AND BY USE OF ONLY PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT IN COUNSELOR TRAINING DUE TO A LACK OF JOB ANALYSIS. OTHER ISSUES NEEDING RESOLUTION INCLUDE THE DIFFERENTIAL NATURE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELING, THE RELATIONSHIP OF EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE WITH OTHER PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES, THE NEED FOR A STRUCTURAL PATTERN TO SERVE AS A MODEL FOR DEVELOPMENT, AND THE COUNSELOR-CLIENT RATIO, THIS IS ONE OF THE REPORTS FROM THE ZION CONFERENCE AND THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DEMONSTRATION CENTERS INCLUDED IN "ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE IN ILLINOIS." (PS)

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE IN ILLINOIS

Reports from the Zion Conference and
The Elementary School Demonstration Centers

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Prepared By

Department of Guidance Services
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Issued By

Ray Page
Superintendent of Public Instruction

THE FUTURE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE

Hubert W. Houghton*

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Doctor Houghton uses selected research to point up the need for a well-defined conception of the elementary guidance program as a uniquely functioning entity. Evidence is cited which shows that programs tend to be more problem-centered and less preventative-developmental than may be desirable. Unresolved issues are well delineated.

In preparing for this presentation of our future destination in elementary school guidance, I remembered faintly some story about a bird which used to fly upside down and backwards. It was reported that he did not know where he was going, but he certainly could see where he had been. Unfortunately, I am not sure exactly where we have been, or are, in elementary school guidance. Yet, the future direction is dependent upon some indication of its past and current status. Sometimes, I wish for the reappearance of Sherlock Holmes. He would know precisely and without hesitancy the locale of guidance services and functions. No puzzlement for him - he always knew. Remember, "it's elementary, my dear Watson." "It's elementary."

Since early correction of pupil problems is dependent upon their early recognition, current emphasis upon elementary school guidance will probably not diminish in the future. Since attitudinal or emotional development is accepted by many psychologists as affecting academic or intellectual performance, or, perhaps, this is another reiteration of the fact that we educate the whole individual. Elementary school guidance may receive stress from this direction. Then, of course, guidance focuses upon the developmental, preventive and continuous, rather than the corrective and remedial, fits well into the necessity for elementary school guidance activity.

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* Doctor Hubert W. Houghton is Chief of the Counselor Preparation Unit, Guidance and Counseling Programs Section, United States Office of Education, Washington, D.C. This article was written by Doctor Houghton in his private capacity. No official support or endorsement by the United States Office of Education is intended or should be inferred.

The preliminary statement of the joint ACES-ASCA Committee on the Elementary School Counselor, issued this year, places "Counselor" in italics, states that he has the three major responsibilities of counseling, consultation and coordination, and envisions him as "a professional person, educationally oriented, highly knowledgeable in the area of child growth and development, with a broadly based, multi-disciplinary background in the behavioral sciences and a high degree of competence in human relations".

Roberta McKellar, Florida State University graduate student, reported in May, 1963, a study of concepts, functions and organizational characteristics of guidance in elementary schools as seen through the questionnaire replies of 183 elementary school counselors representing 20 states. Over 3/4 of the elementary school counselors felt that the primary emphasis on counseling students should be placed on the developmental needs and decision points in the lives of the total range of students, that elementary counselors should have some prior paid experience in elementary school teaching, that the elementary school counselor should be both a generalist and a specialist, and that during the next 20 years, the elementary counselor will become a coordinator of the many counseling facilities in the school and community and will spend more time helping parents and teachers than individual children.

A study of the literature, along with an observation of demonstration projects in progress, hint at some emerging agreements and features that may become part of both the undergirding basic theory and functional aspects of elementary school guidance. A major purpose of guidance on this level appears to be the modification of pupil, teacher, and perhaps, parent behavior, with such objectives in

terms of the child attained through a variety of individual and group experiences within and outside the classroom, and curriculum through direct or indirect involvement of teacher, administrator and counselor. The service exists for all boys and girls, who, through it, are assisted toward self-understanding, self-acceptance, satisfactory social interaction and successful academic experiences. The aforementioned charge suggests that data on children and their needs must be continuously gleaned and analyzed, with local studies particularly helpful in determining needs of boys and girls specific to the geographical area. Special knowledge, approaches, and training are necessary for effective elementary guidance services, whatever the title of the person performing the functions.

Yet, a variety of approaches exists in the elementary school guidance area and complications preventing agreement will exist until there is resolution of their appropriateness and subsequent continuance or rejection through demonstration and research. Approaches include: (a) extension downward of secondary school guidance services; (b) synonymity with good teaching or integration with the curriculum; (c) association with mental hygiene or mental health with a problem-centered concentration; (d) association with therapy, with a highly trained clinician or specialist; (e) the human development or child study approach, where any school personnel with a developmental psychology background or even smattering can function; and (f) a team approach or a coordination of pupil personnel services, with occasionally a synonymity of guidance and pupil personnel services.

Doctor Harold F. Cottingham, Head of the Department of Guidance and Counseling, Florida State University, presented a status review of guidance in the elementary school in an address on April 10, 1963, at the APGA Convention in Boston. He raised several issues needing resolution in the field of elementary school guidance which, summarized here and reminiscent of the complications

arising from the previously cited approaches, are as pertinent today as in 1963, e.g., (a) the structural pattern which should serve as a model for the development of elementary guidance services within a school or school system, which involves determination of the focal point as the teacher, a roving consultant serving several schools, or a counselor within each school or a particular assigned group of schools, although there is argument that the thinking should be in terms of functions, letting each school develop its own pattern of structural activities; (b) differentiated nature and characteristics, if any, of elementary school guidance; (c) relationships with other pupil personnel services, including the distinct functions of the school psychologist, school social worker and elementary counselor, the assignment of diagnostic and therapeutic roles, the administrative degree of these various specialties as opposed to pure consultation or advisement and the emphasis upon identification and prevention as opposed to remediation and treatment.

In a conversation with the director of a workshop for elementary school guidance personnel, with the 30 participants from various states, I asked the director's impression of present elementary school guidance procedures as he saw them through the discussions of these enrollees. His comments were:

-- that present elementary school guidance practices were very problem-centered with little concern for the preventative but with emphasis on the remedial and work with the educationally deviant;

-- that there is an extension downward and development of secondary school guidance practices in the main; consequently, there is strong emphasis on the counseling function and the vocational aspects, particularly in group work;

-- that the philosophical bases for practice are essentially trait and factor, so that there is considerable reliance upon the use of cumulative records, tests, and information collecting and strong diagnostic activity;

-- that titles, job descriptions, and functions vary widely from person to person and school to school; the evolvement of role and function seems to be the result of the personal perception of the job incumbent, e.g., his needs, security in the broad sense, and then consideration of school and community needs. Basically, these workers are fulfilling the roles and functions of other pupil personnel services areas, especially outside New York State and California, where very little of these services exist;

-- that there is little awareness of educational shortcomings and of recent educational research and innovation; this, perhaps, may be complacency, but perhaps more a lack of awareness or understanding of possibilities and new directions and a fear of change.

Some guideposts to the future will be provided in a forthcoming publication, Guidance Services in Elementary School - A National Survey, of the Guidance and Counseling Programs Branch of the United States Office of Education. Smith and Eckerson distributed a questionnaire in 1963-64 concerning data from the previous year to a stratified sample of elementary schools of enrollment over 100 employing a "Child Development Consultant" and got returns from 5,400 school principals, - a 95% return, upon which the publication reports.

Uncertainties exist also in elementary school counselor education programs, since such training, in many instances, is based on professional judgments because of a lack of a job analysis or guidelines for the counselor position. Training programs vary from those extremely similar to the ones preparing secondary school counselors,

those with a so-called core deemed common to the preparation of all types of pupil personnel workers or child development specialists, to those for the consultant rather than the counselor and for the generalist rather than the specialist.

With respect to elementary counselor preparation, the tentative draft of Anne Meeks' ASCA Committee working on the APGA project, Guidance in the Elementary School, indicates that while the scope of the elementary guidance program will eventually determine the best professional preparation and while there is yet no academic preparation statement, "there is agreement that such preparation should involve a balance of course work in: (1) psychology of learning and of personality development; (2) sociological and biological bases of human growth and development; (3) guidance theory and techniques - with emphasis upon counseling and pupil analysis; (4) statistics and measurement and appraisal; (5) curriculum development; (6) administration and supervision. It would seem necessary to require at least 60 hours of graduate preparation. Since the work of the counselor is primarily concerned with the child as a learner in an educational setting, the counselor must be thoroughly cognizant of both the learning process and of the classroom situation."

It should also be remembered that in the Nitzschke-Hill study of the preparation and functions of the elementary school counselor, the 42 institutions which claimed that the elementary school counselor training program was distinctly different from that of the secondary school counselor, showed these commonalities in their counselor education programs: course in guidance in elementary schools; work in such areas as child development, counseling with elementary school children,

parent-child relations and individual appraisal and testing; a practicum (but required in only a little over 1/3 of the institutions); supervised laboratory experiences in elementary schools.

An invitational conference on government - university relations in the professional preparation and employment of counselors was administered in Washington, D.C., on June 2 and 3, by the University of Missouri under contract with the United States Office of Education and the Office of Manpower, Automation and Training. Certain points of view, while not unanimously shared by conference participants, may be of interest to you for consideration in your discussions.

It was pointed out that the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth had suggested a counselee - counselor ratio of 600 to 1 at the elementary school level and that on this basis, the need for counselors would be 42,350 in 1965-66 and 53,875 in 1969-70. One participant, taking issue with this proposal on the basis that experience does not bear out the ability of the counselors to answer the needs of twice as many elementary as secondary students, put forth again his concept that the number of counselors at all levels of education should be based upon the number of teaching faculty and proposed that in elementary schools, there should be one full-time counselor on a team with not more than seven full-time teachers. This would constitute about 193 students in public elementary schools and about 259 in nonpublic schools. The proponent of this concept suggested, also, experimentation with a ratio of one psychologist and one social worker for every three to seven counselors.

Determination of future action with respect to theory, practices, counselor role and function, training and organizational pattern(s) in elementary school guidance should be cooperative, involving not only representatives of the guidance profession, but elementary school principals, school social workers, school

psychologists, classroom teachers, elementary supervisors, and representatives of related disciplines since, presently, all seem to have some interest and involvement. Efforts may have to be not only local, state, and regional, but national, with such possibilities as a national commission, study groups sponsored by APGA and/or other professional organizations, a task force established by the United States Office of Education, or a special interprofessional committee of elementary administrators and supervisors and guidance workers.

It should be noted that under the aegis of the Guidance and Counseling Programs Branch, a small conference of experts on elementary school guidance has already been held in Washington where relevant research from other disciplines was presented and whose proceedings will eventually be released. An invitational conference of larger proportion sponsored by a southern university will be held in the fall to determine needed research in elementary school counselor functions and training.

My final work in terms of future directions is a continued communication among yourselves with respect to your project activities and experiences and a transmittal of this information to the profession. You are on the ground floor of not only some really exciting experimentation, but in a position to make some tremendous contributions to the guidance and education of youngsters. Some of your techniques are well worth watching, e.g., to cite a few, Albion's child-study groups, with eventual suggestion of discussion topics by parents; Canton's work on parent-teacher conferences and parental workshops; Deerfield-Wilmot's interest in discovery and development of creative vocational and leisure interests; Highland's use of group guidance in the primary grades; Troy's test-selection committee, one day rotation of all professional personnel to overcome a pseudo-isolationship through location of teaching stations, and proposed qualifications, especially in course

requirements for the guidance coordinator; Melvin-Sibley's use of a university student; Rockford's training of volunteer mothers to assist in independent reading activities; and I could go on and on, - each report of yours contains points which I have underlined in red in order to remember. But, share these and future experiences. I think, eventually, you may have to come to grips with the differences, if any, between 7th and 8th or junior high school guidance and the elementary guidance program. You write of the former, with its strong resemblance to the senior high school guidance program, much more confidently, it seems - and this is generally true in our field. I am also impressed with the construction by the Department of Guidance Services of an evaluation form.

In trying to grope for a conclusion, I first thought of a criticism made on the tentative draft of the Meeks' committee report, "I don't think you have emphasized enough the right of the child to participate in his own development", a worthy caveat or caution, but I really found the conclusion in your East Chicago Heights' report under the preface of the major objectives of the guidance programs. I am sure that many of us will accept this as where we are and where we are going, - "As an integral part of the educational process, the guidance program is mainly concerned with helping boys and girls discover their needs, assess their potentialities, formulate realistic goals, and proceed to the realization of accomplishing these objectives with increasing self-direction. In this sense the guidance program will serve to help the student find the meaning in what he is, what he does, what happens to him, and what he may become. This sort of interpretation is arrived at through a long process of experience in self-evaluation, and an awareness of opportunity in an accepting climate, with adequate counseling and other services available to help him solve his everyday problem of living intelligently and constructively."

I congratulate Doctor Robert Zeller, Mr. Richard Garber and the Illinois State Department of Guidance Services for their foresight, planning, encouragement, and demonstration efforts with respect to the provision of elementary school guidance services. I am most happy to see the involvement of counselor educators. The enthusiasm, labor and conscientious application of present project counselors and consultants are evident in the written reports. May I wish you continued success in this most significant undertaking.